

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 00998 210128Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 DLOS-09 OIC-02 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 AF-10 ARA-10 EUR-12 SS-15
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O 210023Z MAR 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0155
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 00998

PASS TO AMBASSADOR RICHARDSON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS
SUBJECT: LOS - PRESIDENT AMERASINGHE

1. ON WEDNESDAY MARCH 15 THE ASIAN GROUP MET TO
CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF THE LAW OF THE SEA
CONFERENCE PRESIDENCY. THE OUTCOME OF THIS MEETING
WAS AS FOLLOWS:
- A. THE GROUP IN ITS ENTIRETY STRONGLY SUPPORTED
AMERASINGHE'S CONTINUATION. TO THIS END BOTH THE
LOS AND UN ASIAN GROUPS WERE TO REQUEST SYG WALDHEIM
TO APPEAL TO COLOMBO TO ALLOW "LINKAGE"
OF AMERASINGHE WITH THE GSR DELEGATION.
- B. ASIAN GROUP WILL COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH
LATIN GROUP TO IRON OUT LATTER'S OBJECTIONS TO
AMERASINGHE. SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WILL COMMENCE AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE WHEN ALL PARTIES ARE ASSEMBLED IN GENEVA
FOR FORTHCOMING LOS CONFERENCE.
- C. ASIAN GROUP FEELING THAT A SMALL MINORITY
SHOULD NOT DOMINATE THE MAJORITY MAY CALL FOR A FULL
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 USUN N 00998 210128Z

CONFERENCE VOTE IF LATIN GROUP IS NOT COOPERATIVE.
NO MATTER OUTCOME, ASIAN GROUP WILL NOT RELINQUISH
POSITION OF PRESIDENCY. SUBJECT OF POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR
TO PRESIDENT WILL NOT BE BROACHED UNTIL QUESTION OF
AMERASINGHE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY FINALIZED.

2. JAPANESE PERMREP ABE MET WITH WALDHEIM ON FRIDAY,

MARCH 17 TO CONVEY STRONG SUPPORT OF ASIAN GROUP FOR AMERASINGHE AND REQUEST THAT SYG CONVEY THIS FEELING TO GSL. ABE WAS INFORMED THAT SYG HAD MET WITH NEW UN SRI LANKAN AMBASSADOR FERNANDO. FERNANDO WAS NOT ENCOURAGING AND INDICATED GSL WAS NOT WILLING TO RECONSIDER QUESTION OF "LINKAGE".

3. WALDHEIM TOLD ABE THAT NUMEROUS COUNTRIES HAD REQUESTED SYG ASSISTANCE AND THAT HE (WALDHEIM) INTENDED TO MAKE ANOTHER DEMARCHE TO COLOMBO, METHOD AND DATE UNSPECIFIED.

4. MISSION OFFICER LEARNED FROM RELIABLE SOURCE IN JAPANESE MISSION THAT MINISTER IN SOVIET EMBASSY TOKYO APPROACHED JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS BUREAU, AS WELL AS AMBASSADOR IGUCHI RECOMMENDING FOLLOWING PROCEDURAL APPROACH TO LOS PRESIDENCY:

- A. GENEVA LOS CONFERENCE SHOULD AVOID PROTRACTED WRANGLE OVER AMERASINGHE'S CONTINUATION AS PRESIDENT.
 - B. IF IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN AMERASINGHE, SOVIETS ARE READY TO SUPPORT ASIAN CANDIDATE.
 - C. SOVIETS SUGGEST HOWEVER THAT PART IV BE MADE A PERMANENT COMMITTEE IN WHICH ASIANS
- CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 USUN N 00998 210128Z

SHOULD HOLD CHAIRMANSHIP.

- D. SOVIETS PROPOSE THAT FOUR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN, PLUS HEAD OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE, ROTATE IN THE POSITION OF CONFERENCE PRESIDENT.
- E. IF SUCH A SYSTEM IS ADOPTED THE ASIAN CHAIRMAN (FOURTH COMMITTEE) SHOULD BEGIN THE ROTATION.

5. PRESENT MOOD OF ASIAN GROUP IS STRONG DESIRE TO MAINTAIN AMERASINGHE. THEY DO NOT WISH TO LOSE FACE IN THE CONFERENCE AND ARE STRONGLY DETERMINED. AT THIS TIME GROUP HAS NO INTENTION OF CONSIDERING SOVIET PROPOSAL. LEONARD

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